

WHITESBURG, KENTUCKY
MOUNTAIN EAGLE
SEP 23 1976
WEEKLY - 5,726

Schorr hearings show: Congress under CIA's thumb

By JOSEPH NOCERA
Capitol Hill News Service

WASHINGTON—Lest there be any doubt about who's running the intelligence show these days, listen to the latest word from CIA director George Bush:

"If I know an individual member (of Congress) will make intelligence information public," America's number one spy told a gathering of former intelligence officers recently, "I am not going to give it to him."

Congress is still a problem for Bush, you see, because some of those guys on Capitol Hill just can't keep a secret. So even though there's a new Senate intelligence oversight committee, Bush will be the one to decide—in the interest of national security, of course—whether they should know what the CIA is up to.

Lest there be any doubt about who's running the intelligence show these days, listen to Rep. James Quillen, a Tennessee Republican on the House Ethics Committee, lecturing CBS reporter Daniel Schorr at a hearing last week:

"Did you know, Mr. Schorr, that 25 per cent of that Pike report (compiled by Rep. Otis Pike's, D-N.Y., Select Committee on Intelligence and leaked to the Village Voice by Schorr) was classified as national security information?"

Schorr said he was unaware of that, but he was quite skeptical of national security classifications.

"Well," said Quillen, "the CIA told us it was 25 per cent classified and, because of that, an overwhelming majority of the House of Representatives voted to keep it a secret."

So there you have it. After three years of investigations and hearings, of learning about assassination attempts, unwitting LSD trips, experiments with dangerous poisons, illegal domestic surveillance, a mail opening campaign of such subversives as Rep. Bella Abzug, and other seamy practices, the "overwhelming majority" in Congress is still willing to take the CIA at its word.

Remarkable.

And very little bit amazing too, that the agency could turn the tables on Congress so quickly, so shrewdly, and come out of its three year ordeal as powerful and as secretive as ever.

But that's what has happened. Instead of looking into allegations that the CIA was funding mercenaries during the Angolan civil war and contributing money to candidates in Italy's recent election, Congress is busy beating its collective breast because Daniel Schorr got his hands on the unreleased Pike report.

This, of course, has been the CIA's strategy all along, to show that Congress and the press could not be trusted with CIA covert goodies. And when Schorr leaked the report to the Voice, the ensuing uproar was more than enough to divert, for good, any lingering attention still on the agency to the alleged congressional sieve.

From that point on, there were no more press exposes. No more oversight hearings. No more dramatic disclosures.

The Pike report paints a picture of an agency that has blundered and humbled its major intelligence functions, but it has gone unread and unnoticed by Congress and the press, while the manner of its publication has been rehashed again and again.

Yes, the Schorr hearing last week was an important event for all reporter, a First Amendment confrontation of the first degree. At a press conference in defense of Schorr's right to keep his source secret, an all-star collection of reporters, one after another, reiterated their support for the CBS newsmen. It was all in terms of Congress versus the press and no one much bothered to mention the CIA until I.F. Stone, dean of Washington muckrakers, got to the podium. "I am ashamed of the way the press has acted in this thing," he bellowed. "The press has been remarkable shoddy. Why isn't anyone covering the CIA anymore? That's what we should be doing."

Most of the reporters at the press conference stopped taking notes and shook their heads and raised their eyes to the sky as if to say, "The old geezer's really gone overboard this time." Stone walked out of the room alone, and his comments were never deemed worthy of the evening news.

George Bush must have been pleased.